Review of Mistahia Health Region

Report to the Minister of Health and Wellness

October 3, 2000

Submitted by: Mistahia Health Region
Review Team

Malcolm Maxwell
Linda Iwasiw
David Mador
Ken Wilson

Table of Contents

A. BACKGROUND 3

B. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE MISTAHIA HEALTH REGION REVIEW 5

C. KEY ISSUES FACING MISTAHIA HEALTH REGION AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS KEY ISSUES 7

- C.1 Governance of Mistahia Health Region 8
- C.2 Management of Mistahia Health Region 10
- C.3 Medical Administration 12
- C.4 Designation of Queen Elizabeth II as a Regional Referral Center and Provision of Secondary/Specialist Services 13
- C.5 Rural Primary Care Hospitals 15
- C.6 Recruitment and Retention of Nurses 16
- C.7 Funding Levels for Mistahia Health Region 17

D. STRATEGY FOR ISSUES RESOLUTION AND ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION . 19

APPENDIX A: REVIEW TEAM TERMS OF REFERENCE

APPENDIX B: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Review of Mistahia Health Region

A. BACKGROUND

The Minister of Health and Wellness commissioned an independent, practical and results oriented review of the Mistahia Health Region to propose solutions to critical secondary care and overall governance and management issues. The timing for this review was in response to the pending crisis with respect to the provision of secondary care services at the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital. The Terms of Reference for the Review Team are included as Appendix A. The Review was initiated on August 30, 2000 and completed on October 3, 2000.

The Mistahia Health Region has been the subject of several recent review, reports and interventions aimed at resolving ongoing service, funding, governance and management issues.

Among these initiatives are:

- The Auditor General completed an Operational Review of Mistahia Health Authority May 2000 and submitted nineteen recommendations to address a number of issues. The Board of the Region accepted the recommendations and submitted a report in July, 2000 noting action and time-lines to respond to the Auditor General's recommendations.

- Mr. Ralph Coombs an independent consultant, reviewed the organizational and management structures of the Region and submitted 16 recommendations in April 1997.

- Dr. Larry Ohlhauser, College of Physicians and Surgeons has facilitated retreats with Physicians, Board and Senior Management to assist the parties in problem solving.

Notwithstanding these interventions, among others, the Mistahia Health Region has experienced ongoing challenges in the design, delivery and management of essential services to Mistahia residents and outlying areas. The principle duties of the Review Team focused on addressing these ongoing challenges are:

- To provide concrete recommendations to resolve the specific and immediate specialty services' issues identified by the Northwest Regional Medical Staff and the Auditor General's report. These issues include:

  - designation of Queen Elizabeth II as a regional referral center
  - the resource support for specialty services in Queen Elizabeth II; address the specialist services' issues for Queen Elizabeth II and the six primary "hospitals" operating within the Mistahia Health Region

- the required human and fiscal resources to provide reasonable access to patient care
- remuneration for health professionals to ensure recruitment and retention including nurses.

- To recommend concrete strategies to ensure effective governance through the Mistahia Health Region Board.

- To review the administration structure of the health authority responsible to the CEO and recommend any required restructuring.

B. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE MISTAHIA HEALTH REGION REVIEW

The Terms of Reference stated that the review was to build on, validate or modify existing proposed solutions/recommendations to the issues already identified.

Given the inherent limitations and challenges of a three-week review time frame the following approach to the review was adopted by the Review Team:

- Review all relevant reports, material and data to provide a thorough understanding of the region's demographics, service needs and profile, funding base and requirements, and the region's governance and management framework and operation.
- Interview key informants/stakeholders within Mistahia Health Region.
- Interview external experts/resources.
- Engage and communicate with Board, Management and Northwest Regional Medical Staff to ensure that all key parties are informed on a timely basis as the review proceeds.
- Establish an issue resolution mechanism with a focus on actions and results on an immediate, priority basis.

The list of interviews is included as Appendix B.

Given the extensive material on the Region's issues, operation and service requirements and the willingness of the Northwest Regional Medical Staff, Board and Senior Management, nursing unit staff and supervisors to convey issues and solutions in an open, constructive manner, the Review Team was able to achieve the Review's expected outcomes within the four week period. The recommendations submitted to the Minister of Health and Wellness are based on the following considerations:

- As pointed out in the Auditor General's Operation Review May 2000, there is a "lack of comparative benchmarks, performance targets or standards being readily available to gauge the operational efficiency and effectiveness" of the Mistahia Health Region.
- Any funding recommendations to address the Mistahia Health Region deficit trend to sustain operational viability would need to be addressed given the impact on the other health authorities.

- Realistically, a four-week review can only focus on the broader service, management and governance issues. Detailed analysis i.e. due diligence would be required to address required specific secondary services and associated financial and human resources.

- The scope of the review does not include an analysis of the overall budgetary requirements of the Mistahia Health Region.

C. KEY ISSUES FACING MISTAHIA HEALTH REGION AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS KEY ISSUES

This section of the report describes the key issues facing Mistahia Health Region which must be addressed to ensure the ongoing operation and delivery of effective, efficient and responsive services through effective and trusted governance and management structures. The Review Team identified critical challenges facing the Region, however, several positive features exist which provide a foundation to address the significant challenges. These positive features include:

- Board, Medical Staff and Senior Management recognize the key issues facing Mistahia Health Region.

- Mistahia Health Region has sincere, committed Board, Senior Management and Medical Staff. All levels recognize that addressing critical issues requires commitment, dedication of resources, time and an effective process that will work for Mistahia.

- Community support for secondary health care services, which is evident through the correspondence from business and community leaders.

- A local nursing school at the Grande Prairie Regional College to train and focus on continuing education for nurses required by Mistahia Health Region.

- The recruitment of specialists e.g. orthopedic surgeon, general surgeons and internist means the Region can attract specialist resources. The Region currently has the core of required secondary services.

Immediate Threats

Prior to describing the key issues facing Mistahia, it is important to note that the Review Team is of the opinion that Mistahia Health Region is facing two critical and immediate threats which require immediate action. One threat is the loss of medical specialists including some of those recently recruited. This would represent a serious setback in the provision of secondary services in the Mistahia Region. The other threat is a significant and urgent shortage of registered nurses. The shortage of nurses is a serious concern both for the capacity to operate existing services and the potential risk and safety issues associated with more seriously ill patients.

These threats have reached a critical state because of ineffective and dysfunctional relationships between the Board, Medical Staff and Senior Management which have in turn resulted in a failure to plan, make difficult choices and take action.

In response to these critical threats, the Mistahia Health Region announced on September 7, 2000 a major expansion to surgical services at the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital i.e. to open a fourth Operating Room (OR) at the Queen Elizabeth II to be in full service by the end of 2000. Opening the new OR is intended to improve access to services and reduce wait lists for residents of the Mistahia Health Region and surrounding area. The Region also announced the intent to recruit an additional anesthetist, a fourth surgeon, and orthopedic surgeon and a second opthalmologist. These additional specialists are intended to ease the load on existing surgeons by sharing "on call" responsibilities. To support this expanded surgical program, the Region further announced this it is recruiting, hiring and training an additional thirty-one nurses and other health professionals.

While the Review Team strongly supports the provision of a broad range of secondary medical services within Mistahia and the designation of Queen Elizabeth II as a regional referral center, the lack of joint preparation by Board, Management, and Medical Staff places this proposed expansion in jeopardy. In the context of a serious nursing shortage across Canada and a requirement to recruit an additional twenty registered nurses to adequately staff those services already in place prior to this expansion, safe stabilization of existing patient services must be the first priority. The Review Team strongly encourages the Region to stabilize its existing services and resources prior to further service enhancements.

C.1 Governance of Mistahia Health Region

The Review Team agrees with the Auditor General's conclusions and recommendations to address the governance issues facing Mistahia. In addition, the Review Team emphasizes the importance of addressing the lack of trust in the Board. Rebuilding trust is critical to the required planning and delivery of health care in Mistahia. The recent announcement and action of the Board to expand surgical facilities and to recruit nurses and health professionals reflect the Board's intent to address concerns raised by the Northwest Regional Medical Staff.

Rebuilding trust in the long term, will require targeted interventions and action to address the governance/board concerns raised in interviews at all levels of the Region:

- There is an unacceptable leadership vacuum.
- There is poor communication of direction and expectation.
- There is ineffective decision-making.
- There is a need for more effective strategic planning and common vision and goals.

- There is a need to address the contradictions in the Board's decisions taken to achieve a balanced budget while also seeking to expand clinical services without allocation of associated required resources.

- There is a need to address ongoing poor staff moral.

- There is a need to improve communications with medical staff and to engage medical staff in decision making.

- There is a need to ensure that the governance and management roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated and expressed.

- There is a need to address the perception that the Board supports the six rural hospitals to the detriment of Queen Elizabeth II Hospital.

It is the strong opinion of the Review Team that the current conditions within Mistahia represent serious risks to the provision of specialized medical services in the Region, to the maintenance of a high standard of patient care within the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital and to the financial viability of the health authority.

Effective governance is key to mitigating these risks. The commitment and dedication of the Board members is very evident. The Board has clearly struggled in good conscience with the competing demands of balancing the budget and the requirements for service enhancements. The Board has expressed its resolve to address key governance decisions, to remove itself from management issues and to develop through Medical Administration and the Chief Executive Officer an effective working relationships with Medical Staff.

However, current relationships between the Board, Medical Staff and Senior Management have significantly deteriorated. The analysis of the interview results have convinced the Review Team that the existing conflict and dysfunctional relationships will impede the ability of the Board to exercise the strong, effective governance mandate essential to addressing the immediate, critical issues facing the Mistahia Health Region. Reluctantly, the Review Team has come to the conclusion that the Region requires a renewed governance approach to enable Senior Management and Medical Staff to work constructively on the challenges facing Mistahia. These changes must be addressed unencumbered by the conflicts and experiences of the last several years.

Review Team Recommendations

- *The Review Team supports the governance recommendations detailed in the Auditor General's Operation Review of Mistahia Health Region, May 2000. It is noted that the Auditor General's recommendations address both governance and management issues.*

- *The Review Team acknowledges the actic n and time-lines of the Mistahia Health Board in response to the Auditor General's report.*

- *The Review Team recommends that the Minister of Health and Wellness consider the establishment of an alternate mechanism to exercise the governance function to address the critical issues facing Mistahia working constructively with Senior Management and the Medical Staff. It is the Review Team's understanding that the Minister has the option of appointing an "official administrator" in the authority's place for such period of time as the Minster determines is required in accordance with Section 10 of the Regional Health Authorities Act*

- *The Review Team recommends that the "alternate governance mechanism". Senior Management and Northwest Regional Medical Staff fix the poor working relationships among Medical Staff, Senior Management and Board members. Focused interventions to build trust and communications and to address poor morale are required. The outcome should be to identify a common set of expectations around the accountability framework (i.e. who is responsible to whom, for what?), the decision making process on key service issues, the internal and external communications on service issues, etc. In this regard, the Review Team further recommends that Alberta Health and Wellness support the required focused interventions by providing resources and guidance to assist the Region.*

C.2 Management of Mistahia Health Region

The Mistahia Health Region Senior Management is aware of the critical issues challenging the service viability and overall operation of the Region. The Review Team's recommendations on the management structure and its operation recognize that other health authorities are also challenged in the management of regions and in ensuring accountability for service planing and delivery.

The Review Team is of the opinion that the management structure team is not "top heavy". There is however a clear need to appropriately rationalize and align roles and responsibilities to ensure efficient and effective management.

The Review Team considered the comments of the interviews as a basis for its recommendations on restructuring the administrative structure. The interview comments included:

- There is a need to address the dysfunctional administrative structure and poor direction to administration.

- There is a need for common goals among the Medical staff, Senior Management and Board.

- There is a need to modify the organizational structure to improve the planning and management of clinical programs and better integrate medical staff and service manger insights into decision making.

- There is a need to address the ineffective structure and processes for planning, design, delivery and an ongoing management of medical care and service provision in the Region.

- There is a need for Senior Management to be more proactive and to follow-up on Board direction.

- There is inadequate attention by Senior Management to staff morale and the need for communication and involvement of staff in service design and delivery.

Based on the analysis of the interview results, the Review Team concluded that the Chief Executive Officer has exercised the management function with dedication and commitment to meeting the needs of Mistahia residents. The issues facing Mistahia require strong leadership and proactive decision making. It is not clear that the Chief Executive Officer has addressed issues in a timely, proactive manner with the Board, Medical Staff and Senior Management.

The Review Team considered very carefully the impact of the recommended changes to the Board and the management of the Region. The Review Team observed that the CEO has reasonable support from Senior Management, Medical Staff and Regional Managers. This support provides the required foundation for strengthening these relationships and for ensuring the required continuity between the Chief Executive Officer, Senior Management and Medical Staff.

The Review Team also sees strengths with the operation of Mistahia. For example, the program leads for laboratory, diagnostic imaging and pharmacy among others, clearly work directly and positively with Medical Staff on key issues and decisions. The nursing staff within Queen Elizabeth II also highlighted the positive working relationship with Medical Staff. The challenge for Mistahia is to extend the teamwork and dedication to quality health services to the overall operations and administration of the Region.

Review Team Recommendations

- *The Review Team recommends that the individual/individuals entrusted to exercise the governance function, develop strong, clear performance expectations for the Chief Executive Officer and monitor the performance for a six-month period. These expectations should include a review of the current administrative structure and take the required priority and longer term actions to:*

- *to establish an overall accountability framework to define who is responsible to whom, for what and use this framework to guide communications and decision making among Medical Staff, Senior Management and Board; this framework should also clarify the roles and responsibilities of the regional management and operational levels of the Mistahia Health Region.*
- *clearly assign responsibilities for strategic and operational planning of programs and services, with a strong emphasis on the integration of Medical Administration into these functions;*
- *enhance the level of competence in several key Senior Management positions in particular, the required senior leadership to address clinical and acute care issues and to address human resource issues. The human resource leadership must include specific interventions to address poor staff morale;*
- *increase emphasis within the management team on the strategic management of acute care and physician services in the Region and in program management;*
- *locate or provide site offices for senior regional executives responsible for medical and clinical services at the Queen Elizabeth II site, to facilitate informal communication and building of working relationships;*
- *differentiate clearly within the senior management structure between corporate support responsibilities and operational responsibility of clinical departments and programs; and*
- *to secure a Communications Specialist/Consultant to focus on internal and external communications.*

C.3 Medical Administration

The Review Team supports the perspective of the Medical Director and the Medical Staff of the Mistahia Health Region that the medical staff structure and processes should be strengthened. Effective participation by the Medical Staff in program decision making and in providing recommendations to the Medical Director and Chief Executive Officer are essential to providing acute care and especially secondary medical services in this Region. Past failures to establish these links have contributed significantly to the current problems.

Review Team Recommendations

- *The Review Team recommends that the Chief Executive Officer, Chief of Staff, Medical Director and President of the Medical Staff jointly develop an accountability framework addressing the functions set out in the Medical Staff Bylaws and the needs to strengthen the planning and management of clinical programs. In preparation of this framework, consideration should be given to the definition of the committees and other processes by which physicians*

carrying out responsibility for medical administration may work jointly with managers of clinical programs and services to make decisions. Specifically:

- *articulate roles of the Medical Director, Chief of Staff of Queen Elizabeth II and Medical Staff;*
- *describe the structure and functions of the Regional Medical Advisory Committee;*
- *strengthen the position of the Medical Director as a member of the Senior Management Team;*
- *streamline clinical decision making process; and*
- *ensure a well-developed accountability structure for medical administration.*

- *The CEO must take strong, proactive action and meet on a regular formal and informal basis with Medical Staff to directly address medical care issues.*

- *The Mistahia Health Region should recognize the critical function of medical administration by instituting a reasonable remuneration and written expectations for physicians engaged in medical administration.*

- *The Review Team recommends that a physician recruitment plan should be developed. Prior to recruiting additional medical staff and extending further privileges, the required financial resources should be identified and secured. This plan must be directly linked to the service plan being developed by Hamilton-Chomik as referenced in C.4*

C.4 Designation of Queen Elizabeth II as a Regional Referral Center and Provision of Secondary/Specialist Services

The designation of the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital as a regional referral center for secondary core services was a common objective shared by physicians, the Board and Senior Management during the courses of the interviews. The Review Team recognized, however, that there is an expressed lack of clarity on the specific service, financial and operational implications of regional designation. There was a clear understanding that designation as a regional referral center would require fiscal and human resources support.

There has been extensive work completed by the Region on what is required to maintain, sustain and enhance the secondary level acute care services for the Mistahia Health Region. Mistahia includes general surgery, orthopedic surgery, dental surgery, ophthalmology, urology, obstetrics, gynecology, psychiatry, internal medicine, and pediatrics as secondary services. The Review Team is not in a position to validate or support the conclusions of earlier studies on the required secondary services. However, the Review Team agrees with the Auditor General's caution on what is considered the population base for service planning and delivery purposes. i.e. "expanding the capacity of Queen Elizabeth II (to service the secondary service needs of the extended trade

population of 200,000) would need a much broader comprehensive approach to increasing referrals to justify the claim of serving a significant portion of this large a population."

The Mistahia Health Region has contracted with Hamilton-Chomik Architects to develop a regional service plan. According to the "Regional Service Plan" proposed for the Mistahia Health Region this project will:

- Update the Mistahia Health Region (MHR) needs assessment by building on the 1997 MHR Needs Assessment report and incorporating existing information from other special studies and demographic trends.

- Assess service utilization patterns and relate these to service populations (e.g., sub-populations within MHR and adjacent regions).

- Develop service plans for MHR services, which are based on health needs, generally accepted standards (benchmarks), community consultation and cost-effective use of available resources.

- Encompass preparation of service plans for core programs and services funded by MHR, and service requirements for province-wide programs operated by other authorities

- Assess health services needs within a ten-year timeframe with demographic patterns extended to about 2015.

As an observation, the Review Team notes that the Queen Elizabeth II Facility generally appears sufficient in structure and design to sustain existing services for an interim period until the required enhancements are made. However, it was apparent to the Review Team that Queen Elizabeth II will require significant structural changes in several key areas on a short-term basis including for psychiatry, outpatient and emergency services and diagnostic services.

Review Team Recommendations

- *The Review Team recommends that a broad range of secondary services for Mistahia residents and surrounding areas should be available through the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital. The planning and resourcing for these secondary services should be reflected in the provincial business planning process and cycle and position Mistahia to respond and make critical service decisions in a business-like, planned way and minimize crisis management.*

- *The Review Team reinforces the Auditor General's recommendation that Mistahia "service planning should be based on a realistic assessment of the population service base so as to avoid risks of planning services that may not be needed or cannot be sustained". Further, the Review Team recommends*

that enhancement of immediate secondary services should be based on a recognition that Mistahia population base (for secondary services) is 110,000 – 120,000.

- *The Review Team recommends that the regional service planning underway by Hamilton-Chomik should be endorsed and supported by Board, Senior Management and Medical Staff and proceed in an expeditious manner. The Review Team further recommends that the scope of the Hamilton-Chomik work should be expanded to include a review of the human resource requirements including for physicians as appropriate.*

- *As noted earlier in the report, the Review Team recommends that the Mistahia Health Region should stabilize its existing services and resources prior to further service enhancements.*

- *The Review Team recommends that Alberta Health and Wellness and Alberta Infrastructure should initiate and support plans to perform capital upgrades at the Queen Elizabeth II for psychiatry, outpatient and emergency and diagnostic services in line with the service plan requirements.*

C.5 Rural Primary Care Hospitals

The six rural hospitals provide important primary care services to residents of the rural areas. The rural hospitals appear to support enhanced secondary services and the designation of the Queen Elizabeth II as a regional referral center. However, it was stressed that this designation must not negatively impact the services provided to residents through the rural hospitals.

Review Team Recommendations

- *The Review Team recommends that communication among the medical and nursing staff within the Queen Elizabeth II hospital and six rural hospitals be enhanced to promote the articulation of common goals, team work and improved decision-making.*

- *The development of the regional service plan addressed in C.4 must consider the services of the six rural hospitals and ensure that service referral and delivery among Queen Elizabeth II and the six rural hospitals is effectively planned and coordinated.*

- *The Review Team recommends that the CEO's review the management structures noted in C.2 should result in enhancing the ability of staff and physicians at rural sites to make site-specific decisions to improve patient care.*

C.6 Recruitment and Retention of Nurses

The recruitment and retention of nurses was identified as a critical priority by all interviewees. The Board in its recent decision to initiate an aggressive recruitment campaign for thirty-one nurses and other health professionals needed to support the new Operating Room, recognized and acted on this critical need. This recruitment is now actively underway. As noted earlier, in addition to the recruitment of thirty-one nurses and other health professionals announced by the Board, Mistahia also requires an additional twenty nurses to stabilize existing services. Recruitment of nurses is happening in a broader provincial and national context. It is the opinion of the Review Team that the recruitment of fifty nurses may require at least six to eight months and possibly longer notwithstanding pursuing every recruitment strategy in an aggressive manner.

The retention of existing nurses appears to be strongly impacted by the stressful working conditions and expectations on nurses. These existing conditions and expectations can be summarized as follows:

- no stability at the unit supervisor level;
- minimum support for education/training and ongoing skill development; staff are often requested to use personal vacation time for training;
- nurses are requested to "fill in" for positions without the required experience and training;
- poor communication to nurses on the Region's priorities and plans; and
- there is evident fatigue due to shift coverage schedules.

The Review Team is of the strong opinion that the recruitment and retention of nurses is critical to the ongoing service viability of the Region.

Review Team Recommendations

- *The Review Team recommends that the Mistahia Health Region develop a retention and recruitment plan for nurses including specific short term and long term strategies and initiatives. This plan should be integrated with the overall human resources plan for the Region.*

- *The Review Team recommends that Alberta Health and Wellness allocate one time focused dollars to assist Mistahia Health Region in the recruitment, retention and education of nurses. In specific terms, these dollars should be focused to:*

  - *recruit, train and support front line supervisory level positions;*
  - *recruit, train and support orientation of nurses;*

- *provide staff development and training for existing nurses and new recruits. Staff development should also be available for the health professionals within the health authority; and*
- *provide stress management workshops to address staff needs.*

- *The Review Team recommends that Mistahia establish and maintain linkages with the Grande Prairie Regional College, the Capital Health Authority and the Calgary Regional Health Authority toward retaining and securing nurses and to meet professional development needs.*

- *The Review Team also recommends that the Region should engage professional expertise to meet the recruitment objectives set by the Region.*

C.7 Funding Levels for Mistahia Health Region

As pointed out in the document "Business Case for Mistahia Health Region Additional Funding", November 1999, Mistahia faces a significant, ongoing operating deficit. The Auditor General points out that Mistahia Health Region is operating with a deficit of approximately $3 million and stresses that Mistahia "is at risk of being unable to sustain operation viability unless the deficit trend is reversed". It is noted that while the Region is operating within budget in the current fiscal year, this results largely from vacant positions due to staffing difficulties.

The focus of several reports prepared on behalf of Mistahia and reviewed by the Review Team is that the current population based funding formula does not provide sufficient funds to meet the needs and expectations for secondary services.

The Review Team is not in a position to provide a solid rationale based on financial analysis for the addition of increased funding for Mistahia to address the ongoing deficit and required secondary services. However, it is apparent that the combined effect of the past operating decisions of the Mistahia Health Authority and the application of the funding formula leave a situation where expansion of secondary services will be very difficult for Mistahia to sustain financially. However, the Review Team is supportive in principle, of additional resources for secondary services. This support in principle is based on the premise that the Mistahia Health Region would initially develop a solid service and financial plan focused on specific services and interventions to stabilize operations within Mistahia. Pursuant to this stabilization, the Review Team's support in principle would be based on the premise that the Region would implement a phased service plan consistent with the Region's available financial resources.

Review Team Recommendations

- *The Review Team recommends that the Region develop a realistic multi-year development plan which proposes medical staff recruitment, which is coordinated with hospital staffing, with diagnostic services, construction requirements, and financial planning based upon the needs of the population*

to be served. Further, these requirements should be addressed by Alberta Health and Wellness within the context of the overall funding of secondary and tertiary services in the province.

- *Further ad hoc expansion of secondary services should not occur prior to the completion of the multi-year development plan and service stabilization. The development of this multi-year plan must be linked to the outcomes of the work of Hamilton-Chomik as noted in Section C.4 of this Report. The development of this multi-year plan should be considered a high priority by all levels within Mistahia. The results of the multi-year plan should be clearly integrated with the 2001-2002 Region business plan process for submission to Alberta Health and Wellness.*

D. STRATEGY FOR ISSUES RESOLUTION AND ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the Review Team recommendations will require strong leadership, commitment and team work among the Board, Senior Management, Northwest Regional Medical Staff and all staff of the Mistahia Health Region. Other key components of effective implementation include the required resources to implement change and an effective issues resolution and monitoring process.

Review Team Recommendations

- *The CEO and President, Northwest Regional Medical Staff be requested to jointly submit monthly reports to the interim governance mechanism and subsequently to the Minister of Health and Wellness on key actions and issues over the next six to nine months. The initial report should be submitted by the mid-November 2000.*

- *The interim governance mechanism should establish an interest based problem solving process to address the ongoing issues which arise. This process should include the following key components:*

  - *an Implementation Team with membership from the Regional Northwest Medical Staff, Senior Management and regional management. This Team should ensure open and transparent communication to all staff and key stakeholders of the Region. This Team should be limited to five or six people. Regular consultation with the interim governance mechanism should occur;*
  - *the Implementation Team should establish Task Forces to work on the specific recommendations in the report and ensure that the necessary background information is in place;*
  - *the Implementation Team should develop options and recommendations for review by the interim governance mechanism; and*
  - *the interim governance mechanism should make the final decisions associated with the implementation of the Review Team recommendations.*

- *An ongoing interest based issues resolution mechanism should be developed to address ongoing issues following the implementation of the Review Team recommendations.*

- *Alberta Health and Wellness should designate a senior level official to provide guidance and support to the Implementation Team as required.*

- *The Implementation Team should immediately identify the key actions to be taken to stabilize the operation of the Region and critical service delivery issues.*

Appendix A

Terms of Reference for Mistahia Health Region Review

TERMS OF REFERENCE TO ADDRESS ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY NORTHWEST REGIONAL MEDICAL STAFF

A. Background

- Northwest Regional Medical Staff have indicated that there is a pending crisis with respect to the provision of specialty services at the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital.

- Dr. Larry Ohlhauser, College of Physicians and Surgeons has facilitated retreats with Physicians, Board and Senior Management to assist the parties in problem solving.

- The Auditor General completed an Operational Review of Mistahia Health Authority May, 2000 and submitted nineteen recommendations to address a number of issues. The Board of the Region accepted the recommendations and submitted a report in July, 2000 noting action and time-lines to respond to the Auditor General's recommendations.

- Mr. Ralph Coombs an independent consultant, reviewed the organizational and management structures of the Region and submitted 16 recommendations in April, 1997.

B. Scope of Review

- An independent, practical and results oriented review is required to recommend solutions to the specialist services and management and governance issues submitted by the Northwest Regional Medical Staff. This review is to address the specialist services' issues for Queen Elizabeth II and the six primary "hospitals" operating within the Mistahia Health Region.

- The review is to build on, validate or modify the existing proposed solutions/ recommendations to the identified issues.

- The review is to include an issues resolution mechanism with a focus on actions and results on an immediate, priority basis.

- The review is to include a communications protocol to ensure that all key parties are informed on a timely basis.

C. Principle Duties of Review Team

1. To provide concrete recommendations to resolve the specific and immediate specialty services' issues identified by the Northwest Regional Medical Staff and the Auditor General's report. The statement of recommendations is to include the

specific actions to be taken, the process, the responsible person(s), and time-line (as relevant) to address the following specific issues:

- designation of Queen Elizabeth II as a regional referral center
- the resource support for specialty services in Queen Elizabeth II
- the required human and fiscal resources to provide reasonable access to patient care
- remuneration for health professionals to ensure recruitment and retention including nurses.

2. To recommend concrete strategies to ensure effective governance through the Mistahia Health Region Board.

3. To review the administration structure of the health authority responsible to the CEO and recommend any required restructuring.

4. To consider and build on the existing documentation and background material e.g. Auditor General May, 2000 report, Six Point Plan, Business Plans, etc.

5. To work closely with the consultants conducting a functional study of the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital and to link with the work underway on the utilization studies currently underway.

6. To interview the Board, Senior Management of Mistahia Health Region and selected regional staff, the Northwest Regional Medical Staff and other individuals as identified.

7. To recommend a transition strategy for implementing and monitoring the required governance and management refinements.

D. COMPOSITION

The Review Team membership includes:

Malcolm Maxwell (Chair)
CEO
Crossroads Regional Health Authority

Ken Wilson
Assistant Deputy Minister
Health Strategies Division

Linda Iwasiw
Senior Vice President
Health Services - Palliser Health Authority

Dr. David Mador
Medical Director
Royal Alexandra Hospital

E. Accountability Relationship

- The Review Team will be directly accountable to the Minister of Health and Wellness.
- The Review Team will debrief the Minster on any immediate recommendations by September 5, 2000.
- The Review Team will be available to address inquires on the recommendations submitted to the Minister and to follow-up with the Board and CEO on the implementation of the Review Team's recommendations.

F. Timelines

A final report will be submitted to the Minister by September 25, 2000.

G. Resource Support

- The Review Team will receive support and guidance from the ADM, Health Strategies, Alberta Health and Wellness.
- The list of interviewees/arrangements will be completed by Alberta Health and Wellness. The relevant documentation will also be made available.

Appendix B

List of Interviews

List of Interviews

- Board Members of Mistahia Health Region
- Chief Executive Officer and Senior Management Members
- Representatives of Northwest Regional Medical Staff
- Unit Nurses, Queen Elizabeth II Hospital
- Nursing Unit Supervisors
- Regional Managers of Nurses
- Program Heads
- Regional Managers
- Union Leaders
- Medical Staff and Nursing Managers of Six Primary Care Hospitals